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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Twenty-second session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 545th MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 6 March 1961, at 11.30 a.m.

President: Mr. OBAIDI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)
later: Mr. HUMPHREY (United Kingdom)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.5 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The PRESIDENT, declaring open the twenty-second session of the Board, said that he would like to see initiated a new procedure whereby the outgoing President, before handing over the presidency, made some observations concerning the period of his tenure of office. He himself had not had an opportunity, as President, to participate in UNCTAD's ongoing work during that period, and he hoped that the situation could be remedied to enable his successors to contribute, between sessions of the Board, to the attainment of UNCTAD's objectives. The Board might have an opportunity to take a decision to that effect when it took up the question of rationalization of the permanent machinery of UNCTAD.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS (item 1 of the provisional agenda)

(a) ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of the President

2. The PRESIDENT invited the Board, in accordance with rule 18, as amended, of its rules of procedure, to elect the President of the twenty-second session from among the representatives of the States listed in part B of the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX), in accordance with the rotation provided for in rule 19, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure and annex I to those rules.

3. Mr. IWABAYASHI (Japan), on behalf of Group B, nominated Mr. Marshall (United Kingdom) for the office of President.

4. Mr. GARCIA REYNOSO (Mexico), on behalf of the Group of 77, and Mr. IRUSA (Czechoslovakia), on behalf of Group D, supported the nomination.

5. Mr. Marshall (United Kingdom) was elected President by acclamation and took the Chair.

6. The PRESIDENT said that the connection he had had with UNCTAD during the 15 years since he had first participated in one of its meetings afforded an opportunity for assessment of the organization's contribution not only to the work of the United Nations but to thinking about the problems of developing countries and the position of those countries in the world economy. That contribution had been a decisive one and he was convinced that UNCTAD had a significant contribution to make in the future. Paradoxically, the difficulties encountered in defining UNCTAD's role in the 1980s sprang, to some extent, from its past achievements. It had alerted the United Nations system to a wide range of problems and had perhaps encouraged the General Assembly itself to take a greater hand in economic affairs.

7. There were three significant changes in the situation facing UNCTAD in 1981 compared with the position in 1964. Firstly, the world economic situation was now considerably more troubled. Secondly, and connected with that phenomenon, there was not now such a broad consensus on the role of government and of governments in economic management. Thirdly, and possibly most significantly, there had been an important change in the nature of thinking about development. In the past there had been a tendency to assume that the development process was relatively homogeneous and that it was possible to concentrate on the nature of the external environment

in which that process took place, on the basis of somewhat simplified assumptions regarding concepts such as "the stages of economic growth". In fact the development process was seen as something far more complicated. The international development co-operation effort had to be more closely geared to actual national circumstances if it was to achieve results. The International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade was the fruit of the collective experience which had been gained.

9. UNCTAD had, over the years, slowly interpreted the word "trade" comprehensively, as the external economic environment in all its facets, even co-operation among developing countries. On the other hand, over the years, in the perception of the term "development", wide gaps have to be examined more closely in the future. There were significant barriers, however, to the transition from the relevant work done largely by them. Firstly, there was the economic crisis, which had been primed on individual and collective self-reliance of developing countries on the implications of that crisis for the external economic environment of the development process. Secondly, there was the attention being given to economic co-operation among developing countries, involving important questions of concepts and principles which it would be necessary to settle to mutual satisfaction. Thirdly, there was the work being done with regard to the least developed countries, which was the subject of a special session to be held in September 1981. Lastly, there was the work to be done following the adoption of the new International Development Strategy.

10. The accomplishment of such a far-reaching task would be a challenge rather than a disappointment. It suggested that the Board should address itself in three levels. Firstly, with respect to substance, the Board had a number of important questions to ask during the progress of work which were still remaining to be done. In that connection, he looked forward to hearing the statement the Secretary-General of UNCTAD was to make that afternoon.

11. Secondly, with respect to the Board's approach to its work, he suggested that the attempt to make the organization more efficient even under the heading of "rationalization", which might ensure the thrift, the work was simply not being done as efficiently as it should be, and it must be done better. The most important thing, perhaps, was to achieve greater effectiveness of discussion and a greater reading of views. While group statements and positions were valuable in the negotiation of specific texts, they led their limitations when it came to resolving difficult problems where a collective approach and collective analysis were required. UNCTAD was an important part of the fabric of international consultation and it was important to keep that fabric in good repair. He hoped that it would be possible to complete at the present session the useful work done at the preceding session of the Board to revise its rules of procedure.

12. Thirdly, at the dividing between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Conference, it was not too early to start thinking about what the aims of the sixth session should be. That session would be crucial for the future of the organization at the present uncertain time in the history of the United Nations and in international economic negotiations.

Election of the Rapporteur

12. The PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of Rapporteur, pointing out that, under the established cycle of rotation, the Rapporteur should be the representative of one of the States listed in part C of the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX).

13. Mr. GARCIA REYNOSO (Mexico), on behalf of the Group of 77, nominated Mr. Barros-Orsiro (Uruguay) for the office of Rapporteur.

14. Mr. KOBAYASHI (Japan), on behalf of Group B, and Mr. PROSA (Czechoslovakia), on behalf of Group D, supported the nomination.

15. Mr. Barros-Orsiro (Uruguay) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

The meeting rose at [illegible] p.m.